BRACEBITS

VOL 1. NO. 4 NOVEMBER 1986

EDITORIAL

by Hal Nason

Welcome to the fourth edition of BRACEBITS. While this is the fourth edition, it is our FIRST MONTHLY ISSUE!! Yes, we are now going to publish monthly, though we will alternate between issues which are 8 and 4 pages long. Hopefully, in the near future, all issues of BRACEBITS will be at least 8 pages long. In order to accomplish this feat, we will need YOUR HELP in two ways.

First of all, we need more members. If you know of someone who is an Atari owner, but not a member of B.R.A.C.E., bring that person to a meeting. Give your best sales pitch to get them to try us out. Also, if by chance somebody you know is in the market for a computer, try your darndest to get them to buy an Atari. Point out to them that they can't buy a better computer at any price, much less for the price of an Atari. Plus, they have you for a resource person to help them set up and get running. Finally, they will have B.R.A.C.E. to back them up and help them out.

The second thing you can do is to become an ACTIVE member of B.R.A.C.E. Every member can contribute to the club in one way or another. For instance, we are searching for a person to fill the newly created post of Secretary. It will require only a few hours a month of your time. We need people to help post circulars to publicize our meetings, to contribute to the newsletter, etc. ad infinitum...

For instance, this issue of BRACEBITS was supposed to be on the topic of programing. We solicited for programs. Not even ONE of our members submitted a program to us! Now I know that many of you do some programing and can't figure out why nobody took the time to look up one of their programs, LIST it to disc, enter the listed program into their word processing program, and write a few lines about what the program does and how to use it. Don't tell me that you are too busy to do it! I hold down two jobs, interact with a daughter every weekend, cook most of my own meals from scratch, watch a lot of TV and VIDEOS, work with my computer, read various magazines on computers (Atari, of course!) and Video equipment, and still find time to be an ACTIVE member of B.R.A.C.E. I'm not the only one either. I know of another person who is a student, husband, employed person, etc. who also is an ACTIVE member of our club. All it takes is a few moments a month.

Now, you might ask at this point, why I am getting on your case about this matter. I want you to belong to the BEST ATARI CLUB POSSIBLE. Alas, our club is only as good as the sum of its members. If every member contributes ACTIVELY, each member will reap the benefits. You will all get back MORE than you contribute. For instance, you will notice a blank space where an ST column should be, but nobody will take the time to write it. All of the ST users will reap the benefits of just one person's effort, right along with us 8-bit users. My point is that this club is going to be as good as YOU MAKE IT!! SO, LET'S WORK TOGETHER AND MAKE B.R.A.C.E. the SUPER CLUB that it can and should be. We will all be better off when you get off of yours duffs and make it happen!

Oh, I would like to thank the members who have contributed to the newsletter so far. Thanks go out to Paul Wojcik (yes, we are finally publishing your program), Gary Grider, Joe Threlkeld, Dan Claudy, Bob Wykstra, and Steven Isert and Norma Williams (for their work on the minutes of each meeting). I would like to give extra special thanks to Phil Taylor. His help with the newsletter is invaluable and GREATLY APPRECIATED. The newsletter would not be as good as it is without his effort.

DISCLAIMER

BRACE BITS is published monthly by B.R.A.C.E. (Bluegrass Region Atari Computer Enthusiasts). All contents, unless otherwise noted, are public domain and available for duplication. This newsletter is created by and for dues paying members of B.R.A.C.E. It is also available on an exchange basis with any other Atari users group. Neither B.R.A.C.E. nor BRACE BITS is affiliated with the Atari Corp.. The articles in this newsletter are the opinions of the authors and do not necessarily reflect that of the officers or the group.

Any dues paying member of B.R.A.C.E. may submit an article to the editor for publication. The deadline for submissions is the first Tuesday of the month the newsletter is due out. Articles may be edited and/or published at the descretion of the editor. Articles may be mailed to Hal Nason, 258 E. High St. #9, Lexington, KY 40508 or submitted via modem to me at 606-255-5989. You will need to call me first in order to arrange a time for me to have my good ol' Atari 800 set up for auto answer. AtariWriter is the preferable format, but any ASCII format will be acceptable.

B.R.A.C.E. meets the third Tuesday of the month at 7:00 P.M.

B.R.A.C.E. SEPTEMBER MEETING MINUTES

By Norma Williams

The September meeting opened with discussion on the parking facilities this month. The U.K. students are back and the lack of parking spaces made it diffucult for alot of members to make it to the meeting on time.

Vice President Joe Threlkeld had to resigned early so a motion was made to go ahead with the election of a new vice president this month. A vote was taken and Phil Taylor was elected the new vice president for the next twelve months.

Also a vote of confidence was taken for the officers in office. Dan Claudy (President) and Norma Williams (Sec/Tres). All members were in favor of these officers to stay in office for the next 12 months.

Next came a discussion on the B.R.A.C.E. disk for November's Swap meeting. These disk will be for sale to all members or given to new members that join at the meeting. If you have a favorite program and would like to see it on the B.R.A.C.E. disk, please submit it to one of the officers or mail it to the B.R.A.C.E. P.O. BOX 13063, LEX., KY. 40583.

Raffle tickets were given to all members at the meeting this month. The drawing will be held at the November meeting. The price is $1.00 per ticket or $5.00 for 6 tickets. The winner will have a choice of a 130XE computer or a 1050 Disk Drive.
This month we had a door prize drawing of a $20.00 gift certificate donated from Kurk Johnson of Reality World. The winner was B.R.A.C.E. member Craig Fields.

This month's demostration was on Telecommunicating. This demostraton was taped using a video cassette recorder. Joe Threlkeld recorded two terminal programs. He demostrated Amodem 7.2 and 850 Express. Dan Claudy demostrated the 1030 Express, TScope and the 80 column emulator VT100 while on CompuServe.

Also from the Atari User Group News we have the listing of the Atari bbs which is "Atari Base", and can be reached by calling (408)-745-5308. Special interest groups (SIGs) on the bbs include: 1.) General, 2.) XE, 3.) User Groups, 4.) Dealers, 5.) Service centers, 6.) Developers, 7.) ST Computers, 8.) ST Art and 9.) Sysops.

The meeting ended with check outs from the library and new member sign ups which consisted of 2 more new members.

The treasury report for September started us with a balance of $366.49. Deposits totaled $98.59. Credits totaled $121.87. The ending balance for September is $343.21.

B.R.A.C.E. OCTOBER MEETING MINUTES

The meeting opened with a discussion that Dan Claudy had with the Sandi Austin from Atari Corporation. He was informed that B.R.A.C.E. was not on the official Atari User Group list. She will be sending us a new contract to fill out to re-submit.

The treasury report given was for two months. B.R.A.C.E. expenses consisted of St Disk, raffle tickets, BraceBits expenses, and software for door prizes. The ending balance was $343.21.

Hal Nason gave a report that BraceBits will now be monthly. Due to the high cost of printing, the paper will be smaller every other month.

On old business, Phillip Taylor announced that the group has enough orders for a new purchase of 3M disk. Please bring in your money so the purchase can be made as soon as possible.

Phillip also mentioned the group purchase of 100 more disk from Micro Electronics, Inc. This should be ready for the Swap Meet in November. They will sell for 50 cents each. These disk include sleeves, write protect tabs and reinforced hub rings.

Library Changes: Phillip Taylor has made some revisions to the Library. The envelopes have been replaced with folders, and an index card filing system has been added. Both these revisions will make check outs from the Library faster.

The door prize this month was won by Sam Hale. He received a Mission Asteroid game. Another door prize was given to Kenny Johnson. He won a free issue of Analog.

The demonstration this month was given by Craig Fields. He demonstrated the 520ST using a Casio Music Synthesizer.

B.R.A.C.E. OFFICERS

PRESIDENT: DAN CLAUDY
VICE PRESIDENT: PHILLIP TAYLOR
SECRETARY/TREASURER: NORMA WILLIAMS

NEWSLETTER STAFF

EDITOR: HAL NASON
ASST. EDITOR: PHILLIP TAYLOR

ALL OF THE ABOVE CAN BE REACHED:
B.R.A.C.E.
P.O. BOX 13063
LEXINGTON KY. 40583-3063

THE PRESIDENTIAL SUITE

by Dan Claudy

It is apparently human nature to gripe about things. One of my first columns teed off on OSS's Action! language, not because it would not do what they represented it to do, but because the documentation won't teach you how to use it and there is no tutoring manual available for it. Well, that's another story, but you get the point. We are always able to find some reason to tear down something.

I am going to do just the opposite this month. I want to tell you of my experiences with a mail order house, Computer Mail Order. In April of this year, I ordered an Atari 800 from them (not new of course). It did not ship until mid-summer, but that was OK because they told me up front there would be a wait.

When it arrived, it would not display on the monitor. I thought it was the power supply and called them on the phone. They dispatched a power supply without requiring the return of the apparently defective one. The new power supply seemed to do the trick. The machine came to life. However, it was short lived. Just a few weeks later, the same problem arose. I could not get a display on the monitor.

This computer came with virtually no warranty other than it would work when I received it. Well, you don't know if you don't ask! So I asked. I called them back again on their toll free line. This is the one which is for orders only. They tell you to use the pay line for questions. I explained my plight and they took pity on me. I was authorized to return it for repair, free of charge. I did, and I just received it back......in working condition.

So it's HATS OFF to Computer Mail Order. Its nice to know of people like this and that's why I am passing on their name and recommending them to you.

We have quite a meeting lined up for this month. Its the Swap Meet where you can trade, buy and/or sell your Atari software and hardware that you have tired of. This is the ideal time to turn some of that "stuff" you have had lying around gathering dust into $$$$, pick up a title you've been wanting to try cheap, bring home a piece of "special" computer hardware, trade items of interest, just look or all of the above. Anyway, its going to be fun. Don't forget, its at the Castlewood Park Barn.

The Raffle comes to a close at this meeting as well. Its time to see who wins their choice of a 130XE computer or a 1050 disk drive. Tickets can still be bought at this meeting before the drawing for $1.00 for one or $5.00 for six. Here's a chance to upgrade to a 130XE or add a drive.

One last thing. We need help! We are splitting the Secretary/Treasurer office due to time constraints Norma has run up against. Norma will remain our Treasurer and we will be appointing a person to the Secretary office. We urge you to consider actively participating in the Group. Please let us know if you are interested in this position. You may contact any of the officers for details of the Secretary's duties.

See ya at the meeting!

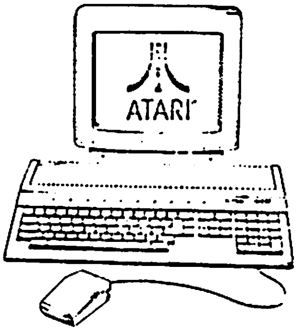
ST CORNER

By Srebmem TS Citehtapa

Oh where, Oh where have the ST people gone... Oh where, Oh where have they gone???

The answer my friend is blowing in the wind. The answer is blowing in the wind.

We really wanted to put something from an ST user this month but no one submitted an article. We know that the ST has a word processor so let's get something in. We want to support you people...but it is hard to support ghosts. EDs.



ST FIRST IMPRESSIONS

By Hal Nason and Phil Taylor

The ST. When you say those letters to any Atari enthusiasts images of super graphics and great sound are created. So in the spirit of helping all of the members decide whether or not they need to think about buying an ST. The editorial staff of Bracebits went and got some hands on experience with this machine. Being 8 bit oriented, this article will be from the perspective of a present Atari user who is thinking about upgrading to the ST.

First, the ST is not a 16 bit upgrade for the 8 bit line. It is an entirely different computer with its own strengths and weaknesses. When you see the ST's screen after bootup you are in a Graphics Environment called TOS. It's like those traffic signs they installed a few years back that are symbols and not words. This makes the computer seem user friendly, however you still have to know what those little symbols mean before you can use the system. The TOS operating system will allow the user to use these symbols or change the system to display words. We found we could use either equally well. The symbols do allow a person to see more clearly what is a FOLDER (subdirectory) verses what is a program.

The main problem we had with the system was the mouse. We were assured by the person showing us the system that the mouse would be easier to use as we got practiced however we were skeptical. To access the files you had to press the mouse button, (the left one) twice in rapid succession. We kept on having problems clicking it just right to access the files. Finally we just opened the files then ran them.

Another problem we encountered was that we kept on getting options we did not want when the arrow on screen ventured too far to the top left hand edge of the screen. We were told that occurred often but with practice we could learn how to better manipulate the mouse.

However this was a minor problem compared to the beauty of the system. The speed we accessed files would make an 8 bit owners head spin. (of course some the files were on a SUPRA 20 meg harddisk).It appeared that the files came up as soon as we asked for them.

We looked at a few graphic demos. They were breathtaking to say the least. The realism with which the images were portrayed on screen were enough to make Michelangelo lay down his brush and pick up an ST. The only words we could think of to describe them were "smooth as silk".

We were told there were 3 graphic modes, low, medium, and high. High 640X400 is only accessible in Monochrome. Low (320x300) and Medium (640x200) were accessible in color. The graphics we looked at were all in either low or medium.

The system seems flexible. An IBM emulator is available now and so is a product called the MAGIC SAC which allows the system to run MACINTOSH software. This seems only natural since the system was billed as the "Jackintosh" when it first came out. Frankly this system seems to be aimed at the Macintosh target market. At a fraction of the cost of a comparable Macintosh system, one may be able to predict the Macintosh's demise, or at least a drop in Macintosh prices.

Software for the ST seems to be easy to get. We looked at the presently bundled wordprocessor 1st Word. It does what any good word processor does and as such seemed to be useable and friendly. However when moving text, if the text you are moving is in a different letter font, when it is moved to a new place you will return to the letterfont of the rest of the block. This is a minor problem and should not be too much of a detriment to the program. Zoomracks is a database program that seems to be fairly flexible and highly useable. A Computer Aided Design program also exists to aid contractors, engineers, architects and the like, and of course games abound.

One problem with the system is that it is not compatible with the present Atari 8 bit line. This means that someone who buys an ST would have to start their software collection from scratch. This must be the reason why so many ST owners have 8 bit Ataris as well. Still an 8 bit emulator would be a strong inducement to buy the system.

Another problem with the 1040 is the fact that the power supply and disk drive is contained in the computer housing. Anyone who has ever had a powerpack for their 800 or XL/XE computer go bad know that this could mean trouble. If the power pack was separate, a user could replace the pack themselves, also if the disk drive was separate another disk drive could be substituted while the ailing drive when to the shop.

Overall, our first test drive of the ST was positive. We do suggest that before anyone buys one, they look at their present system and see if they need the capabilities of the ST. For many who have a fairly complete 8 bit system, this may mean waiting till their 8 bits give out and no more parts are available. For others, who have need for the speed, graphics and other increased capabilities of the ST, an investment from approximately $700 to $1200 can get you into the world of ST computing.

Thanks to Reality World Computers for their help with this article.

SAMPLE PROGRAMS

by Hal Nason

Here are two programs which I wrote several years ago. The first program is designed to create an array 117 characters long. I was working on creating my own data base program (this was before I discovered SYNFILE+) and created this program along with the other program, which is designed to retrieve the data created by the first program. If you are learning BASIC, you may find these two programs interesting to experiment with, since they use the BASIC statements NOTE and POINT which may be new to you and because of the use of the POSITION statement to place the information on the screen in the desired location. Also the programs make use of a feature unique to ATARI BASIC which is the use of Subscripted string variables in order to create and retrieve the records for the data base. This technique is necessary in order to create records which are the same length but composed of fields of varying lengths which accommodate data of varying lengths.

The NOTE and POINT statements make possible the creation of records which may be accessed totally at random. But the use of these statements necessitates records of uniform length. This is where it becomes necessary to place the variable strings which hold the data into a MASTER STRING which completes the record. In order to do this one must make use of a subscripted string variable and assign each field's string variable to part of the MASTER STRING. An example of this technique is found in LINE #65. Notice that the field for the address is AD$ and it is set equal to part of the MASTER STRING, TEMP$, and is allowed 14 characters, i.e. AD$=TEMP$(1,14). The other fields are placed in the same matter and fill the entire string with 117 characters, thus each record created is exactly 117 charters in length. It is the data in the MASTER STRING which is saved to disc and recovered by use of the second program.

I wrote these programs before I had read any book on advanced BASIC. Hence, I do it slightly differently than it is done in the books. But, I was proud of myself for thinking of a way to do it on my own. I was amazed at how close I came. Oh yes, these programs may still have some bugs in them since I never got beyond the experimental stage. So you may want to type them in and play with them as a learning experience. HAVE FUN!!!

```
10 REM FIELD TEST DEMO
20 REM CREATES AN ARRAY
30 REM 117 CHARACTERS LONG
40 DIM  REC$(117), TEMP$(117), AD$(14), NM$(20), PH$(8),
SC$(3), C$(1)
41 DIM JAN$(6), FEB$(6), MAR$(6), APR$(6), MAY$(6), JUN$(6)
42 DIM JUL$(6), AUG$(6), SEP$(6), OCT$(6), NOV$(6), DEC$(6)
50 OPEN #1,8,0,"D:DATFIL.DAT"
60 OPEN #2,8,0,"D:POINTS.DAT"
64 TEMP$(1,34)="
65 ? "ADDRESS";:INPUT AD$:TEMP$(1,14)=AD$:IF LEN(AD$)=0 THEN
250
66 ? "NAME";:INPUT NM$:TEMP$(15,34)=NM$
67 ? "PHONE";:INPUT PH$:TEMP$(35,42)=PH$
68 ? "SERVICE CODE";:INPUT SC$:TEMP$(43,45)=SC$
69 ? "JAN";:INPUT JAN$:TEMP$(46,51)=JAN$
70 ? "FEB";:INPUT FEB$:TEMP$(52,57)=FEB$
71 ? "MAR";:INPUT MAR$:TEMP$(58,63)=MAR$
72 ? "APR";:INPUT APR$:TEMP$(64,69)=APR$
73 ? "MAY";:INPUT MAY$:TEMP$(70,75)=MAY$
74 ? "JUN";:INPUT JUN$:TEMP$(76,81)=JUN$
75 ? "JUL";:INPUT JUL$:TEMP$(82,87)=JUL$
76 ? "AUG";:INPUT AUG$:TEMP$(88,93)=AUG$
77 ? "SEP";:INPUT SEP$:TEMP$(94,99)=SEP$
78 ? "OCT";:INPUT OCT$:TEMP$(100,105)=OCT$
79 ? "NOV";:INPUT NOV$:TEMP$(106,111)=NOV$
80 ? "DEC";:INPUT DEC$:TEMP$(112,117)=DEC$
85 GOSUB 1000
90 REM IF RETURN ONLY THEN END
110 NOTE #1,X,Y
130 PRINT #1;REC$
135 N=N+1:IF N=136 THEN 250
140 REM STORE POINTER TO BEGINNING
150 REM LINE OF DATA
180 PRINT #2,X
200 ? "OFFSET= ";X
230 GOTO 64
250 PRINT #2,-1
260 END
1000 REM CHECK DATA
1010 ? CHR$(125)
1020 ? TEMP$(1,14),TEMP$(35,42)
1021 ? TEMP$(15,34),TEMP$(43,45)
1022 ? :? "JAN","FEB","MAR","APR"
1023 ? TEMP$(46,51), TEMP$(52,57), TEMP$(58,63), TEMP$(64,69)
1024 ? :? "MAY","JUN","JUL","AUG"
1025 ? TEMP$(70,75), TEMP$(76,81), TEMP$(82,87), TEMP$(88,93)
1026 ? :? "SEP","OCT","NOV","DEC"
1027 ? TEMP$(94,99), TEMP$(100,105), TEMP$(106,111),
TEMP$(112,117)
1030 ? :? "ANY CORRECTIONS Y/N";:INPUT C$
1033 IF C$="N" THEN REC$=TEMP$:RETURN
1035 IF C$="Y" THEN 64
1040 IF C$<>"Y" OR C$<>"N" THEN 1030
```

```
10 REM RECORD RECOVERY TEST
20 REM THIS PROGRAM READS
30 REM FILES CREATED RANDOMLY
39 REM BY POINTEST
40 DIM REC$(117), TEMP$(117), AD$(14), NM$(20), PH$(8),
SC$(3), C$(1)
41 DIM JAN$(6), FEB$(6), MAR$(6), APR$(6), MAY$(6), JUN$(6)
42 DIM JUL$(6), AUG$(6), SEP$(6), OCT$(6), NOV$(6), DEC$(6)
70 DIM X(100)
71 LAST=0:Y=0
```

```
80 REM OPEN DATA FROM FILE
90 OPEN #1,4,0,"D:DATFIL.DAT"
110 OPEN #2,4,0,"D:POINTS.DAT"
140 INPUT #2,P:IF P()-1 THEN LAST=LAST+1:X(LAST)=P:GOTO 140
185 TRAP 320
190 ? "ENTER RECORD NUMBER TO DISPLAY"
200 INPUT R
205 IF R(1 THEN 280
210 IF R)LAST THEN ? "RECORD DOES NOT EXIST":GOTO 190
230 POINT #1,X(R),Y
240 INPUT #1,REC$
250 GOSUB 1000
260 GOTO 185
280 ? "END OF EXECUTION"
290 CLOSE #1:CLOSE #2
300 STOP
320 TRAP 40000:GOTO 185
1000 REM PRINT DATA
1010 ? CHR$(125)
1015 TEMP$=REC$
1020 ? TEMP$(1,14),TEMP$(35,42)
1021 ? TEMP$(15,34),TEMP$(43,45)
1022 ? :? "JAN","FEB","MAR","APR"
1023 ? TEMP$(46,51), TEMP$(52,57), TEMP$(58,63),
TEMP$(64,69)
1024 ? :? "MAY","JUNE","JULY","AUG"
1025 ? TEMP$(70,75), TEMP$(76,81), TEMP$(82,87),
TEMP$(88,93)
1026 ? :? "SEPT.","OCT.","NOV","DEC"
1027 ? TEMP$(94,99), TEMP$(100,105), TEMP$(106,111),
TEMP$(112,117)
1030 RETURN
1033 IF C$="N" THEN REC$=TEMP$:RETURN
1035 IF C$="Y" THEN 65
1040 IF C$()"Y" OR C$()"N" THEN 1030
```

DIRECTORY MOVER

By Paul Wojcik

This program is a utility designed to move your directory from one part of memory to another to allow the space normally taken up by the directory for use in a program.

Instructions for typing it in. In lines 520 and 530, you will notice items in brackets [] these brackets indicate where Atari special characters are located. Follow the keystrokes in the brackets but do not literally type what is contained in them. Do not type the spaces between the brackets.

```
5 POKE 65,0
10 REM DIRECTORY MOVER
20 REM BY PAUL WOJCIK
30 GRAPHICS 0:SETCOLOR 2,0,0:SETCOLOR 1,0,14
40 ? :? :? "   PLEASE BACKUP DISK BEFORE RUNNING"
50 ? "PROGRAM!!!"
60 ? :? :? :? "I WILL NEED 9 COMPLETELY EMPTY"
70 ? "SECTORS IN A ROW BEFORE I BEGIN."
75 ? :? "IT MUST BE BETWEEN 255 AND 510 BUT, DO NOT USE
360-368"
80 ? :? "PLEASE ENTER THE FIRST EMPTY"
90 ? "SECTOR.";:INPUT TOSEC
100 IF TOSEC(255 OR TOSEC)510 THEN GOTO 30
101 TOSEC=TOSEC-1:POKE 769,1
105 FOR SRI=1536 TO 1540:READ X:POKE SRI,X:NEXT SRI
110 DATA 104,32,83,228,96
120 DIM A$(128),B$(1)
130 FOR FRMSEC=360 TO 368
140 RREAD=82:WWRITE=87:POKE 770,RREAD
150 TOSEC=TOSEC+1
160 POKE 778,FRMSEC-(INT(FRMSEC/256)*256):POKE
779,INT(FRMSEC/256)
170 ADRA=ADR(A$):POKE 772,ADRA-(INT(ADRA/256)*256):POKE
773,INT(ADRA/256)
180 B$=CHR$(155)
190 Z=USR(1536)
200 POKE 778,TOSEC-(INT(TOSEC/256)*256):POKE
779,INT(TOSEC/256)
210 B$=CHR$(155)
220 POKE 770,WWRITE
230 Z=USR(1536)
240 NEXT FRMSEC
250 END
260 ? "1)DOS 2.0 OR COMPATIBLE, OR"
270 ? "2)DOS 2.5"
280 INPUT VERS
285 IF VERS=1 THEN VERS=4226
287 IF VERS=2 THEN VERS=4171
288 ? :? :GOTO 280
290 TOSEC=TOSEC-7:NWDIR=105+(TOSEC-361):POKE VERS,NWDIR
300 OPEN #4,8,0,"D:DOS.SYS":CLOSE #4
310 POKE 770,WWRITE
320 POKE 772,0:POKE 773,0
330 FOR TOSEC=361 TO 368
340 POKE 778,TOSEC-(INT(TOSEC/256)*256):POKE
779,INT(TOSEC/256)
350 Z=USR(1536):NEXT TOSEC
510 DIM V$(128)
520 V$="[SPACE] [INVERSE-C] [SPACE] [INVERSE-C] [CTRL-B] [
5*[CTRL-,]] [CTRL-O] [17*[INVERSE ESC/CTRL-)]] [0]
[26*[INVERSE ESC/CTRL-)]] [CTRL-,] [ESC/TAB] [21*[INVERSE
ESC/CTRL-)]]"
530 V$(LEN(V$)+1)= "[22*[INVERSE ESC/CTRL-)]] [28*[CTRL-,]]"
540 POKE 770,WWRITE
550 ADRA=ADR(V$):POKE 772,ADRA-(INT(ADRA/256)*256):POKE
773,INT(ADRA/256)
560 TOSEC=360
570 POKE 778,TOSEC-(INT(TOSEC/256)*256):POKE
779,INT(TOSEC/256)
580 Z=USR(1536)
```

ATARI ALA CARTE

By Phillip Taylor

What makes a system "user friendly"? When I write a program I ask myself, if I knew nothing about the computer except how to turn it on and where the keys were, could I operate the system? I remember how it used to be when I first bought my Atari and the frustration and confusion that occurred when I tried to "make" the computer do something. I had enough patience to stay with it and now I feel confident. But going through the process I made a vow to make my computer so accessible that anyone could run it.

The first thing I did was look at other computer systems and see how they interfaced with the user. I noticed that most all computers displayed the programs available on a menu and allowed the user to load from that menu. The Atari does not do this when you get it and take it out of the box. The only thing you get is that little READY in the corner of your screen. READY for what? In order to find out what programs are available from your disk is to go to DOS wait for your disk drive to groan up and display the DOS menu. To do that you have to be aware of how DOS works. Then you have to leave DOS to run a Basic program and hope you type in the name properly. Finally with any luck you are in the program.

This is why most advanced Atari users use a Menu program called a menu loader. Most loaders only load Basic programs (such as the ANTIC loader and Lazy Loader). But the menu program used ~~in ANALOG magazine~~ loads both basic and machine language programs. I found this program to work well. It can be easily modified to display any disk title you choose to enter since it is written in basic. A good menu program will allow you to run a program on the disk by pressing a few buttons. (NOTE: the Analog loader is available on any Analog disk under the file called MENU. Copies are available in the B.R.A.C.E. Library.)

Assuming you have found a loader that you like, you need to set the file up so that it loads up as soon as you turn on your computer. This is really very simple. If you have a copy of DOS 2.5 there is a utility on the disk called SETUP.COM. All you have to do is to binary load this file through DOS by selecting L on the Dos menu and entering the file name SETUP.COM at the prompt. You will then be given another menu where you can set up an AUTORUN.SYS file. Follow the prompts and when it asks you what file you wish to autorun, enter what ever filename your menu program is under. You will be prompted to insert the disk you what the AUTORUN.SYS file on and VOILA, you now have a disk that will, upon coldstart, boot up a menu and you don't have to do a thing but watch. Please note, this is only necessary if your menu loader is written in basic. If you have machine language menu loader, such as MIRCODOS XL then all you need to do is rename the file AUTORUN.SYS

If you don't have a copy of DOS 2.5, get one. There is a copy available in the B.R.A.C.E. Library. You can also use an AUTORUN.SYS maker. ANTIC magazine has one and the upcoming B.R.A.C.E disk will have one called BOOTSTRAP COMMAND PROCESSOR written by Yours Truly.

So now you can get into your programs easily but how do you get out. If you have a menu loader that is written in basic, all you have to do is put this code somewhere in the beginning part of the program, POKE 580,1. This poke will allow you to hit RESET and instead of the warmstart return to basic, the computer will do a coldstart and reload your menu, then you can start the whole process all over again without switching your computer on and off. I have found that this works with most all programs since the memory location 580 is seldom used. However for programs that are reset proof such as Speedscript and a few other machine language programs, you can't reset back to the menu. However you can just turn your computer off and on and the menu will reload at that point.

A few DOS's and DOS substitutes exist that allow a directory to come up when a user asks for it. SPARTADOS and DISKIO have DIR commands. When a user types DIR, the computer will print up a Directory. This is nice for most users, but a few people may still get confused about the commands since they are not told what to type to get the directory by the computer.

Of course a user friendly system will do you no good without user friendly software. When writing software start with a program menu. This can be easily accomplished by the use of ON GOSUB statements. Example:

```
10 GR.0:REM THIS CLEARS THE SCREEN
20 PRINT "          MENU"
30 PRINT
40 PRINT "       FUNCTION 1 "
50 PRINT "       FUNCTION 2"
60 PRINT "       FUNCTION 3"
70 PRINT "       EXIT PROGRAM 4"
80 PRINT " PRESS THE NUMBER FOR THE FUNCTION YOU WANT ";
90 INPUT A
100 ON A GOSUB 200,300,400,500
120 GOTO 10
```

You can also use the menu as an outline of your program and it will help a beginning programmer think in terms of subroutines. Make sure you put a RETURN statement at the end of your subroutines. You can see how this process works in the SCREENS program published in BRACEBITS Vol 1 No.1

While a menu is not the only thing that makes a program or system user friendly, it make the process more accessible and easier to understand. The next time you turn on your Atari, order something from a menu.

B.R.A.C.E.BITS

VOL. 1 NO. 4 NOVEMBER 1986

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE	ARTICLE	AUTHOR
1	EDITORIAL	HAL NASON
2	MINUTES	NORMA WILLIAMS
3	PRESIDENTIAL SUITE	DAN CLAUDY
3	ST CORNER	SREBMEM TS CITEHTAPA
4	ST IMPRESSIONS	EDITORS
5	SAMPLE PROGRAMS	HAL NASON
6	DIRECTORY MOVER	PAUL WOJCIK
7	ATARI ALA CARTE	PHIL TAYLOR

BRACEBITS
P.O BOX 13063
LEXINGTON KY 40583-3063

LEXINGTON, KY 405
P M
NOV 15
1986

GIVE THE UNITED WAY

CHRIS DOTSON
2900 SPURR RD.
LEXINGTON , KY
40511

The next meeting will be our Swap Meet. It will be located at the Old Castlewood Barn located in Castlewood Park behind the Castle building. To get to Castlewood Park, turn south off of New Circle Road (White Castle Restaurant is located here) onto Bryan Avenue heading toward downtown Lexington. Continue going south for about 7 blocks and turn left onto Parkview Ave. Turn right at the next intersection onto Churchill. Swing around to the right and you will see a small building with a drive leading up to it. This is it.